

The German information service for the east and the organization of printed propaganda among the Muslim population of Russia during the World War I

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Abstract

Based on documents from German archives the article studies Germany's activities during World War I to gain over Muslim population so that they would switch their allegiance. German politicians and the military attached huge importance to propaganda work, with the Information Service for the East being established to carry it out. One of its activities was the provision of printed propaganda: newspapers, leaflets, brochures, particularly, in the Tatar language. These publications were designed for POWs and dissemination in the front. According to the German politicians and military themselves, the Information Service for the East was highly instrumental in facilitating largescale propaganda among Muslims in the entire world, including Muslim ethnicities in the Russian Empire. At the beginning of World War I propaganda campaign was focused on Muslim POWs to involve them in collaboration with Germany, whereas towards the end of the war it was more aimed at spreading the German influence in other countries through former POWs returning to their homeland after the war.

Keywords

German empire, Jihad, Muslims, Prisoners of war, Propaganda, Russian Empire, Tatars, Turkey, World War I